



**CITY OF SCOTTSDALE  
MCDOWELL SONORAN PRESERVE COMMISSION  
REGULAR MEETING  
MINUTES  
Thursday, February 2, 2017  
Florence Ely Nelson Desert Park  
8950 E. Pinnacle Peak Rd  
Scottsdale, AZ 85255**

**PRESENT:** Bob Frost, Chair; Mike Milillo, Vice Chair; Commissioners Bobby Alpert, Steve Dodd, Con Englehorn, Jace McKeighan, and Cynthia Wenstrom

**STAFF:** Bill Murphy, Community Services Director; Kroy Ekblaw, Preserve Director; Scott Hamilton, Senior Trails Planner; Yvonne Massman, Robert Graves, and John Loleit, Coordinators

**1. CALL TO ORDER**

Chair Frost called the meeting to order at 5:00 p.m.

**2. ROLL CALL**

Members present as noted above.

**3. PUBLIC COMMENT**

There were no members of the public who wished to speak.

**4. APPROVAL OF MINUTES** (Discussion begins at 5:01; approximately 1 minute into the meeting)

**COMMISSIONER MCKEIGHAN MOVED TO APPROVE THE NOVEMBER 3, 2016 MCDOWELL SONORAN PRESERVE COMMISSION REGULAR MEETING MINUTES. COMMISSIONER WENSTROM SECONDED THE MOTION, WHICH CARRIED BY A UNANIMOUS VOTE OF SEVEN (7) TO ZERO (0).**

**5. MCDOWELL SONORAN CONSERVANCY UPDATE** (Discussion begins at 5:02; approximately 2 minutes into the meeting)

Mike Nolan said that new steward orientations are sold out for February and close to sold out for March. The steward retreat program had approximately 120 attendees. Sonoran Sundays are

twice monthly, once at Brown's Ranch and once at Gateway. Nature guides are back and recently took out a school group and participated in the Carolyn Allen dedication. Pathfinders have expanded and are out more often.

The Junior Citizens Science Festival is scheduled for Friday, March 10, 2017, from 9:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m. at Lost Dog Wash on the Kovach Trail. The McDowell Sonoran Conservancy is working in cooperation with the City of Scottsdale and various corporate sponsors to host the event. Approximately 250 children are expected to participate.

MSC staff and stewards are working with the City of Scottsdale on developing new trails and are participating in meetings about development of trailhead proposals. The MSC is working with the City of Scottsdale to create short videos about various trails that will be posted on the City's website.

Geologist Steve Skotnicki has created a new baseline bedrock geology of the McDowell Mountains and stewards are working to digitize the map. Mr. Skotnicki received a \$56,000 National Science Foundation grant to age date the rocks in an effort to determine whether there are a series of rocks in the middle of the mountains that are not exposed anywhere else in North America.

Commission members were given an opportunity to ask questions. Mr. Nolan explained that the trail videos will be from the perspective of hikers and mountain bikers as well as the helicopter shots. Mr. Nolan said that steward classes cost \$50.

Commissioner McKeighan commented on etiquette problems with some mountain bikers. He suggested working with the bike patrol to find a solution. Mr. Ekblaw said that trail etiquette might need to be part of a recurring education campaign.

**6. TRAIL UPDATES** (Discussion begins at 5:07; approximately 7 minutes into the meeting)

- Phase 3 area (5:07)

Mr. Ekblaw gave an update on the progress of the Phase 3 area trails from the southwest corner of Pima/Dynamite to Stagecoach and adjacent to Legend Trail. The presentation included a review of plans for Corridors G, H, & J.

He said that staff has been working with the Legend Trail Community Association on location of the trails as well as community connections to the trails. The community expressed concerns about parking. The City will work with Transportation and the police department to find parking solutions. The City will be installing signs to remind people that parking is not permitted in bike lanes.

Commissioners were given an opportunity to make comments. Commissioner McKeighan noted that the Legend Trail community's biggest concern was proximity of trails to homes, and opined that the trail plan has satisfied their concerns. Commissioner McKeighan said that members of the working group walked the lower section of E and enjoyed seeing the trail building process.

Mr. Ekblaw explained that connector trails that are not in the preserve land are part of the State Trust Lands. Because of the SLUP with the State Land Department, the City does manage

those trails and have some responsibility for maintenance costs.

- Tom's Thumb/East End area (Discussion begins at 5:18; approximately 18 minutes into the meeting)

Mr. Hamilton gave a presentation on progress with the Tom's Thumb Trail and the East End area plan. He said that viewpoints along the north side of the mountain have been signed. The renovation process at Tom's Thumb Trail will start in late February and will primarily focus on stabilizing the down slope drainages. Gabion blankets will be installed which tie the rocks together in one mass in the channel in an effort to keep them in place. East End trail renovations will include additional drain dips and restoring the outslope to improve drainage. Tom's Thumb upgrades will include renovation of the climbing access route.

Brown's Ranch renovations will include improving drainage and exploring the concept of splitting the trails off, having one follow the power line corridor in an effort to ease congestion. Any trail work along the power line corridor will be done in consultation with the power companies.

Mr. Ekblaw reminded the Commission that this summer the power company will begin construction in the corridor from Pima and Dynamite to 118th street. They will be installing poles and power lines on the north side of the existing towers.

7. **MARICOPA TRAIL - AGREEMENT WITH MARICOPA COUNTY** (Discussion begins at 5:27; approximately 27 minutes into the meeting)

Mr. Hamilton reviewed the agreement with Maricopa County to be part of the Maricopa Trail, which connects all regional parks. He noted that the City's new trail signs include a small Maricopa Trail logo in the lower corner. On older signs, a small logo has been added. The Transportation Commission will be reviewing the IGA on February 16th.

8. **STAFF REPORTS** (Discussion begins at 5:31; approximately 31 minutes into the meeting)

- Raptor closure

Mr. Hamilton said that the temporary rapture closure was installed yesterday. Temporary fencing and signage was installed indicating the area is closed and showing a photograph of the five fledglings from last year in an effort to encourage people to stay out of the area and keep their voices down.

- Deer Tracking Study

Mr. Hamilton recalled that February 2016, 32 tracking collars were deployed by the City in conjunction with the Field Institute and Arizona Game and Fish. Seven deer were lost to natural mortalities through the year. Six of the collars have been redeployed in the gooseneck area, which was determined to have had a data gap last year. One collar was destroyed.

- Carolyn Allen Amphitheater

Mr. Ekblaw reported that approximately 60 people attended the Carolyn Allen Amphitheater dedication, including Mayor Lane and Council Members. Councilmember Virginia Korte acted as MC for the event.

- Gateway Improvements

Mr. Graves said that the new flagpole and all weather American flag has been installed and includes a downward facing solar powered light on the top. A water fountain has been installed in an effort to encourage people to bring their own refillable bottles and reduce disposable bottle waste. New blinds have been installed in the Gateway meeting room. Bajada Trail signs have been replaced because they experienced sun damage. The signs were still under warranty and the sign company provided replacements.

- Trailhead Planning-Fraesfield, Granite, Tom's Thumb, & Pima/Dynamite

Mr. Ekblaw gave an update on progress at Fraesfield and Granite Reef. The architectural team will bring forward a Municipal Use Master Site Plan for approval once improvements plans are completed. The Conservancy has suggested installing temporary restrooms at Fraesfield and Granite for the upcoming peak season in an effort to encourage hikers to use those trails. Staff is evaluating the costs and management requirements involved with temporary restrooms.

The parking area expansion design process at Tom's Thumb will begin soon and is expected to go into construction this summer.

The Pima/Dynamite architectural contract is scheduled to go before Council on February 7th. More details on the plan will be brought to the Commission in the May/June time frame.

Commissioner Alpert asked about reports of a deer being shot. Mr. Hamilton noted that archery hunting is permitted through January 31st. The City has received no reports of anyone harvesting deer outside of that time frame.

Mr. Ekblaw mentioned that the Legislature is in session and there is some discussion about applying an in lieu fee instead of a tax on open space that the City holds a conservation easement on. He is not sure that would be legal, but staff is following the discussion because it could affect both the Preserve and natural area open space.

Mr. Ekblaw reported that efforts are being made to restrict snake shot or rat shot at a .22 caliber level within the Preserve.

9. **REVIEW BYLAWS** (Discussion begins at 5:42; approximately 42 minutes into the meeting)

Mr. Ekblaw presented the draft bylaws.

Discussion ensued regarding the number of meetings per year outlined in the bylaws and the idea of cutting back to eight meetings a year with the ability to schedule special meetings as needed. It was consensus of the Commission to incorporate the schedule change into the bylaws and bring them back for action in March.

**10. MSPC 2016 ANNUAL REPORT** (Discussion begins at 5:47; approximately 47 minutes into the meeting)

Mr. Ekblaw reviewed the Annual Report.

Commissioner Alpert requested that Commissioners start and end dates be included in the report. Mr. Ekblaw noted that Commissioners' term dates are available on the website. He will check with the Clerk's office to confirm that it is proper to include that information in the Annual Report.

**11. COMMISSIONER COMMENTS**

There were no Commissioner comments.

**12. AGENDA ITEMS FOR FUTURE MEETINGS** (Discussion begins at 5:49; approximately 49 minutes into the meeting)

**March 2<sup>nd</sup> Field tour** – North Area Trails & Trailheads – Tom's Thumb/Fraesfield/Granite

**March 2<sup>nd</sup> Possible Agenda items:**

AZ Game and Fish – Wildlife Report  
Trailhead Planning – Fraesfield, Granite, Tom's Thumb & Pima/Dynamite  
Any Proposed By-Law Amendments?  
Promotion/Marketing Update

**Future Agenda Items:**

Financial Report/Endowment Update  
Desert Discovery Center  
Commercial Use Policy

Chair Frost noted that the Field Tour on March 2<sup>nd</sup> will include a trip north of 136<sup>th</sup> trailhead to look at opportunities for another access point.

Chair Frost requested that the March agenda include a review of the Pima/Dynamite area planning in relation to the power lines. Mr. Ekblaw said that the consultant will consider previous feedback as well as any refined feedback from the Commission.

Chair Frost requested an update on the commercial use policy.

**13. ELECTION OF OFFICERS** (Discussion begins at 5:52; approximately 52 minutes into the meeting)

**COMMISSIONER MCKEIGHAN NOMINATED BOB FROST TO CONTINUE IN THE POSITION OF CHAIR OF THE MCDOWELL SONORAN PRESERVE COMMISSION FOR THE NEXT YEAR. COMMISSIONER WENSTROM SECONDED THE NOMINATION, WHICH CARRIED BY A VOTE OF SIX (6) TO ZERO (0). CHAIR FROST ABSTAINED.**

**COMMISSIONER ENGLEHORN NOMINATED MIKE MILILLO TO CONTINUE IN THE POSITION OF VICE CHAIR OF THE MCDOWELL SONORAN PRESERVE COMMISSION FOR THE NEXT YEAR. COMMISSIONER DODD SECONDED THE NOMINATION, WHICH CARRIED BY A VOTE OF SIX (6) TO ZERO (0). VICE-CHAIR MILILLO ABSTAINED.**

**14. ADJOURNMENT**

With no further business to discuss, being duly moved and seconded, the meeting adjourned at 5:53 p.m.

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